

Pac'Stão versus the City of Police

Contentious Activism Facing Megaprojects, Authoritarianism, and Violence

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■ **ABSTRACT:** This article analyzes community activism and state interventionism within a context of racialized and gendered violence that is both direct/physical and structural. It presents a case study of Manguinhos, a cluster of favelas in Rio de Janeiro experiencing the federal Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), which provided political opportunities for community contentions. A main finding is that an oligarchic-patrimonial system suppressed the participatory-democratic aspirations of the federal government and local activists alike. Nevertheless, new rounds of activism keep surging against a prevailing military-repressive logic. Observations and interviews from fieldwork have been supplemented with written sources—relevant public documents, media sources, and research publications.

■ **KEYWORDS:** community mobilization, patrimonialism, neo-developmentalism, Rio de Janeiro, urban violence

In the modern history of Brazil, the relationship between the state and the favela communities has been a predominantly military-repressive one between “the law” and “the outlaw” (Soares 2019). However, after Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from the Workers’ Party (PT) became the first “man of the people” to be sworn in as president of Brazil in 2003, there were optimistic initiatives from both above and below to change this relationship. This article looks at the encounter between such initiatives and asks what happens to community activism when the state brings a large-scale urban development program to a socially disadvantaged area (e.g., the favelas), where the official policy of the government is “social participation” in any development project. To what extent can a “civilian” and participatory logic of action replace a logic of violence? The article considers the case of Manguinhos, a township (*bairro*) dominated by favelas in the deindustrialized wasteland of the Northern Zone of Rio de Janeiro. The mass media of Rio commonly refer to Manguinhos, together with Complexo do Alemão, as the Faixa de Gaza (Gaza Strip), an allusion to the violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In other words, the media convey Manguinhos as a territory where the logic of violence prevails.

A network of activists launched several initiatives in the mid-2000s to unite the extremely impoverished and fragmented communities of Manguinhos. The activists, many of them young black women, first initiated a campaign to put both the causes and consequences of violence on the agenda. When federal, state, and local authorities in 2007 offered large-scale public investments in Manguinhos as part of the Growth Acceleration Program (Programa de Aceleração



do Crescimento—PAC), the activists wanted to engage with the government so that jobs and improved living conditions might counter some of the causes of violence. The network convened the Manguinhos Social Forum (MSF). Subsequently, the state opened a local police station and constructed a mega police headquarters—the City of Police—in the Manguinhos area. After the police killed several young people in the area, a new wave of protest activism has been unleashed by women (mourning mothers) and the youth (the hip-hop circle Pac’Stão, which alludes to PAC and a violent territory).

I conducted the main fieldwork that underlies this article in 2011 and 2012 (see Braathen et al. 2013). While I am a male, white, and foreign political scientist, I was assisted in the fieldwork by three researchers (one man, two women) from complementary disciplines (human geography and urban planning) with in-depth knowledge of the surrounding area (Zona Norte, North Zone). One of the researchers was a black woman who grew up in Manguinhos and had previously been active in the MSF. The research team’s multidisciplinary and plurality of social identities, and combination of distant and close relationships with the communities examined, made field and interpretative work challenging yet rewarding. In addition to visiting hot spots in Manguinhos and other observations, the team interviewed sociopolitical activists—“old” as well as younger men and women, some of whom had been involved in social history research projects in the community. The team also interviewed some people working for the government and the PAC. I have since made two revisits, the most recent in April 2019, with interviews to update the study. Relevant public documents, research publications, and media coverage have complemented the fieldwork.

After a presentation of theoretical discourses relevant for the analytical framework, the article depicts a context of structural violence by providing a brief socio-spatial and socioeconomic overview of Manguinhos. It then presents a brief account of the history of sociopolitical activism in Manguinhos before examining how the arrival of “neo-developmentalism” (PAC) encouraged, undermined, and transformed various relationships. I analyze the relationship between social-political activists, ordinary people, and other, more powerful actors in the community in order to understand the relationship between the community and the state. The issue is how and to what extent the public works offered by the PAC should be defined, planned, and monitored by the community. After this prospective study of processes leading up to a culmination of the public works in 2011, I offer a short retrospective overview of a militarized state policy in the area from 2012 to 2019 and the civilian responses expressed by favela activists, most of whom were young black women. The article concludes with summary of what has happened with community activism in Manguinhos in the past 40 to 50 years. Three distinct phases, or cycles, of activism are identified, and conditions for a civilian-participatory logic of action are considered.

Analytical Framework

Three theoretical discourses inform the focal points of this article. The first is about patrimonialism (Schwarcz 2019; Weber 1968: 1006–1069), a prism to understand the historical roots of an authoritarian state and society that is constructed by racialized and gendered hierarchies. Brazilian society is ruled by oligarchic elites with origins in the country’s slaveholding *latifundista* past. The slave owners exercised sovereign, almost unlimited and unchecked control of their slaves (patriarchism) and enjoyed economic and political privileges handed over to them by the supreme ruler (King of Portugal, after 1821 Emperor of Brazil) in exchange for loyalty and services rendered to the ruler. Over the years, even in the republic in function from 1889 on, national rulers and their local oligarch supporters could freely mix their private inter-

ests with state affairs and public contracts—the backbone of patrimonialism. The dominated masses, most of them descendants of enslaved Afro-Brazilians, in this sharply hierarchic society are overexploited and underemployed (Singer 2012). After slavery was abolished in 1888, most of the freed Afro-Brazilians had to leave the rural *latifundios* and migrate to the cities in order to survive. The epicenter of Brazilian patrimonialism was, and probably still is, the city that functioned as the capital of Brazil from 1763 to 1960: Rio de Janeiro. The case study of PAC will examine how and to what extent this megaproject development reproduced oligarchic-patrimonial forms of domination.

The second discourse is about the “sticks” employed by the authoritarian state: violence—direct-physical and structural violence (Galtung 1969). The main apparatus of physical violence has been the police. The so-called Polícia Militar (Military Police—PM) was originally the private army of the royal family. After the abolition of the slavery and the proclamation of the republic in 1889, the PM was reorganized and installed in the cities to watch the new populations of freed Afro-Brazilians who had moved into the cities from the *latifundios* (Holloway 1993). During and after the military dictatorship (1964–1985), the urban police fostered death squads in the “war on communism,” and then paramilitary gangs (*milícias*) in the “war on drugs.” The targets of these forces of masculine violence were more often than not black people from the favelas. However, drug traffickers have been increasingly involved in networks that bring together civic leaders, politicians, police, and criminals, linking trafficker-dominated favelas with Rio’s broader political and social system (Arias 2006). According to Luiz Soares (2019), the drug dealers could never have maintained their presence had they lacked solid support within the state apparatus. The deep interconnections among state officials and favela leaders have contributed to the urban violence (Arias 2006). This article will try to identify such interconnections.

The structural type of violence kills slowly, and it causes deaths because, for example, “medical and sanitary resources are concentrated in the upper classes” (Galtung and Høyvik 1971: 73). Some subtle and institutionalized forms of structural violence have been identified in urban studies. In Brazil, urban development interventions often aimed to contribute to “whiten” the cities (Nascimento 1989; Valladares 2000). Black people “live in impoverished urban peripheries in various conditions of illegal and irregular residence, around urban centers that benefit from their services and their poverty” (Holston 2009: 245). The city has become a “war zone”: “the dominant classes meet the advances of the new citizens with strategies of segregation, privatization and fortification” (Holston 1998: 52). The preparations for the sport mega-events in Rio de Janeiro—the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics—deepened and made more widespread mechanisms of illegality, exception, and other authoritarian tendencies of “the entrepreneurial, competitive city.” Rio became a “city of exception” (Oliveira et al. 2020; Vainer 2011). In line with this, the favela can be seen as a “territory of exception” with “a state of exception not legally declared but imposed on the daily life of residents and workers in the territory, where most of the population is excluded from civilian, political, and social rights” (OCU 2010). With the arrival of the sport mega-events, “Olympic exceptionalism” ruled Rio (Ystanes and Salem, this issue). The police enhanced their control of the favelas by building Pacifying Police Units (Robb Larkins 2015; Sørø, this issue), which can be seen as a form of colonial occupation (Salem and Bertelsen, this issue). Manguinhos offers a special case of this phenomenon. The article will explore Manguinhos as a “territory of exception.”

Finally, a third discourse is centered on citizen mobilization and participation. Regarding mobilization, I use the approach of contentious politics, which blends three dimensions: contention (“interactions in which actors make claims bearing on other people’s interests”), collective action (“coordinating efforts on behalf of shared interests and programs”), and politics (“governments involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties”) (Tarrow and Tilly 2015:

7–8). People’s utilization of “political opportunity structures” is paramount. In response to the Brazilian form of brutal urbanization, particularly in the favelas and in the urban peripheries, residents organize “insurgent movements” to confront “citizen inequality that the urban centers use to segregate them.” Thus, “insurgent forms of the social” were found “both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas” (Holston 1998: 47).

Regarding participation, one should note that legislation and institutions to secure citizen participation in urban settings were in place in Brazil before Lula took office (Rolnik 2011). In assessing the dynamics of different forms of citizen engagement, I draw on the distinction between invited and invented spaces of participation (Cornwall 2002). The former are spaces of participation where local communities are invited by external agents (e.g., state agents) to participate, while the latter are spaces where citizens innovate and create their own opportunities and terms of engagement (Miraftab 2004). Invented spaces are seen as more adequate than invited spaces when the goal is capacity building and promotion of active and inclusive citizenship as well as just cities (Miraftab and Wills 2005; Santos et al. 2011). In the encounter between neo-developmentalism and favela activism, I am particularly interested in invented spaces of participation (such as the Manguinhos Social Forum) and their political outcomes.

Manguinhos: A Site of Structural Violence

Manguinhos was for decades a dumping ground for families evicted from central parts of the city. These people were typically moved to Manguinhos for “provisional” relocation. However, many people stayed there for the rest of their lives, without feeling real sense of belonging to that part of the city. They preferred to stick to their own informal human settlement, with scanty contact with other people and other favelas. There were almost no places for people to meet, and turnout for social events and meetings was low. According to one veteran community activist and MSF participant: “My first impression of Manguinhos when I arrived there in 1969, was very bad. The houses were very cramped. But what shocked me most was the violence—and this was long before the drug trafficking arrived” (Interviewee F, male, teacher).¹

Most of the favelas had no public service facilities. To date, there has been very limited information shared with the community, for example, about prevention of diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis. According to a health worker, “some people here grew up even without a birth certificate—how could that be possible in the late twentieth century?” (Interviewee I, female, teacher, MSF participant). An important consequence of the absence of public services and infrastructure was a deep socio-spatial fragmentation of Manguinhos. There was almost no local road network connecting the favelas. However, one significant piece of infrastructure did cut through the Manguinhos area: the suburban railway.

The local train station played a key socioeconomic role for the area. As factories closed down during Rio’s economic stagnation in the 1980s and 1990s, income was increasingly generated by people commuting to the more prosperous and booming parts of the city. Civil construction, domestic work, and street vending were the typical breadwinning activities. As a result of this type of employment, people in Manguinhos became less interconnected. Nevertheless, in Rio’s postindustrial economy, Manguinhos became more attractive for people because of its train connection and relative closeness to the city center and the affluent South Zone. The railway, aided by the closeness of major highways in Rio, contributed to the logistics for the foundation of another emerging economy—namely of drug trafficking (Interviewee A, female, social work student, MSF participant).

Figure 1: Map of Manguinhos cluster of favelas (source: www.wikimapia.org).



The closure of factories and warehouses of the “old” economy opened the space for new squatter camps and informal settlements. From the 1990s onward, these grounds provided a place of refuge for homeless (usually women-led) families, job seekers, and drug traffickers alike. If one subtracts the land that is dedicated to formal economic and public activities, Manguinhos is among the most densely populated areas in the city of Rio de Janeiro. From 1990 to 2000, it had the highest population growth in the city. The available statistics and demographic surveys suggest about 40,000 people reside in the area, with about 75 percent in what the 2010 census categorized as “subnormal settlements” (favelas). Regarding the Human Development Index, Manguinhos’s was 0.726, which ranked it no. 122 out of 126 neighborhoods in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro (PCRJ 2020).² These and other indicators of structural violence underpin the contentions formulated by activists who have kept surging in and around the Manguinhos area.

A Brief History of Urban Community Activism

Residents’ Associations (1980s)

From 1979 on, the Brazilian military dictatorship had to respond to an increasing presence of workers’ militancy and popular mobilization with political concessions. By 1985, the dictatorship was gone. In this change process, a movement of residents’ associations (*associações de moradores*) gained strength in Rio de Janeiro and other large cities (Assies 1994; Dagnino 1994; Holston 1998). However, there were important differences from one resident district to another. In Manguinhos, the process led to the existence of 17 associations, one in each favela. In the neighboring favela cluster Jacarezinho, by contrast, the community activists managed to create

one unitary association. Jacarezinho was less socio-spatially fragmented, with a denser network of factories and with trade unions seeking “class unity” (Interviewees F and I).

Some activists claim that, in comparison, residents in Manguinhos possessed a low capacity for self-organization. They preferred to leave the community affairs to the president of their residents’ association, who then went between residents and politicians to seek an exchange of welfare gifts for community votes in the next election. This clientelistic system followed in the years after a radical “populist,” Leonel Brizola, was elected governor in 1982 (Interviewee B, male, worker, trade unionist, and veteran community activist). Still, here and there, one could find a leader of a residents’ association who raised the consciousness in their community to achieve the common good (Interviewee K, male, veteran community activist, Manguinhos resident). In 1985, 1988 and 1991 there were environmental disasters (floodings) met by successful mobilizations for resettlement within the area and for improved sewage, public illumination and garbage collection.

In hindsight, one of the action leaders regretted they could not mobilize the masses over a longer time period. “The problem is that people are still believing in the political system. They continue to depend on the councilor, the mayor, the governor. They don’t recognize their own power . . . They can be mobilized more on the basis of emotions and fears than on reason. That is why demagogic politicians tend to be successful in this country” (Interviewee F). In other words, most people accepted that the elite-based (oligarchic) and clientelistic system of patri-monialism was reproduced despite the liberal and democratic changes made in the 1980s.

Divergent Developments among Community Organizations (1990s and 2000s)

Around the year 2000, demobilization and a sense of “the day after” prevailed among the urban social movements in Brazil (Souza 2000). Our informants think that, in the 2000s, most of the residents’ associations moved in the wrong direction. First, “they abolished community-based open elections of the leaders. In a favela with 5,000 people, there might be only 70 members. They became more like shareholders in a company, and the president had the majority of the shares.” Second, the state consequently found good partners or allies among these local presidents, who would like to play the clientelistic game with politicians. Therefore, “what happened 20 years ago, in terms of residents’ associations mobilizing against the state has become more and more unlikely.” Third, they have become an armed power locally, increasingly involved with drug trafficking: “Before the problem was drugs being brought into the favela for consumption. Now the problem is drugs being sold *from* the favela. This business is so lucrative and powerful that there is no way the residents’ associations can operate independently from it. Often they help the drug traffickers to negotiate with the government” (Interviewee F).

Nevertheless, Manguinhos saw new initiatives taken by community members—mainly teachers, students, and health workers—connected with progressive professional institutions. Encouraged by the programs of the federal government after Lula became president in 2003, more teenagers from the favelas were recruited to secondary schools and university preparation courses (the *pré-vestibular*). The latter were offered in Manguinhos by local Catholic education centers and the publicly funded Fundação Osvlado Cruz (Fiocruz).

The interviewed activists consider Fiocruz a cornerstone for the social-change-oriented networks in Manguinhos. Fiocruz originated as an institute established in 1900 led by the pioneering bacteriologist Osvlado Cruz. It is organized around multiple teaching, research, and outreach programs. The National School of Public Health is particularly important. Fiocruz’s concept of health is radical: good health is not only the opposite of disease but is also about improving living conditions and enhancing environmental and social rights (Interviewee D,

male, researcher at Fiocruz and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, resident and participant in MSF). This way, they advocated a radical break with the racialized entanglement between public health, security concerns, and urban planning termed *higienização* (hygienization) (Magalhães and Ystanes, this issue). In this perspective, workers and students at Fiocruz consider violence not only a threat to people's physical health but also a symptom of deeper social and structural problems. Therefore, when they registered an alarming increase in violence induced by drug traffickers and police (in its "war on drugs"), they took the initiative to establish a new movement.

The Agenda Redutora de Violências no Local (Local Violence Reduction Agenda—ARV) grew out of weekly meetings in 2005 between people from various residents' associations, women's groups, youth clubs, educational and cultural organizations, handicraft cooperatives, trade unions, and researchers and students at Fiocruz. The ARV organized a public day of action, Walk of Peace with Guaranteed Rights (Caminho da Paz com Garantia de Direitos). The objective was to transform the main street in the "Gaza Strip" into an area of leisure with cultural and didactic activities aiming at generating processes of local identity and belongingness. The event in 2005 gathered about ten thousand people and was replicated almost every following year.

After this success, the ARV tried to include the public authorities in a council for regional sustainable development in order to address "institutional violence," in particular police violence, as well as problems of getting the local society more organized. The challenge was to overcome the combination of social fragmentation and political clientelism. However, the ARV did not manage to develop a joint agenda with the public authorities, and not all the concerned communities supported it in this regard. Instead, the ARV responded to the PAC launched in early 2007 by the reelected Lula. PAC opened a new political opportunity structure for the

Figure 2: Manguinhos seen from the train station (© Tomas Salem).



activists—an opportunity to experience contentious politics on a scale not seen before in Manguinhos. Therefore, in March 2005 the ARV launched the Forum of the Manguinhos Social Movement for an Equitable and Sustainable Development - the Manguinhos Social Forum.

Neo-developmentalism Meets the Favela Community

In his presidential reelection campaign in 2006, Lula promised unprecedented amounts of state funding for collaboration with the private sector to develop infrastructures, create jobs, and reduce poverty. The biggest and most important megaproject coming out of this “neo-developmentalism” was the Growth Acceleration Program PAC (Saad-Filho and Morais 2018; Singer 2012). Lula’s developmentalism was “new” because it emphasized social aims and people’s direct participation in public planning and management (Baiocchi et al. 2013). This section on the PAC depicts how this neo-developmentalism was unfolded in a particular urban context.

The PAC in Rio: An Extremely Top-Down Managed Mega Program

A Much-Needed Program

The PAC started to be rolled out in 2007. The total spending reached R\$509 billion (\$200 billion) by 2010. The money came from the public budgets (60 percent from the federal budget, 40 percent from federated states and municipalities), not from foreign financial institutions. More importantly, significant portions were directed to the subprogram PAC Urbanização de Favelas, or simply PAC-Favelas, which provided investments to upgrade the favelas. Infrastructure (sewage, roads, parks) and housing projects were designed (Christovão 2012). The federal and Rio de Janeiro state governments chose 15 geographical areas for PAC interventions, five of them being favela clusters including Manguinhos. (Interviewee J, female, PAC social work coordinator, public servant of Rio de Janeiro state).

Top-Down Management from the Very Beginning

There was a complete absence of popular participation in the initial planning phases. Rio’s State Public Works Company (EMOP) outsourced a needs analysis to a private consulting company. It held no public meetings and published no report. The Manguinhos Social Forum sent written suggestions about how and where to optimally invest available resources but was not invited to further deliberations. The governor used the tight deadlines given by the federal government (for getting plans approved) to justify the closed process. In the state of Rio de Janeiro, the priorities and decisions were centralized around Governor Sérgio Cabral and his deputy, Luiz Fernando Pezão, who was in charge of public works. As one realized later, Cabral and Pezão had their sinister reasons to be so “hands on.”³ The two held weekly meetings with their political secretaries responsible for works, housing, social assistance, education, and health, and the project was administered by EMOP. They could change the design, targets, and contractors of projects as long as they did not exceed the total budget (Interviewee C, female, teacher at Fiocruz, active in a local residents’ association, MSF participant).

The Projects of the PAC-Favelas in Manguinhos

By early 2008, the Manguinhos plan was ready for implementation, and a consortium headed by the large construction company Andrade Gutierrez was contracted to implement the state interventions. Six months later, works started in Manguinhos. An impact analysis became available on the state government website and claimed that 127,000 families were to benefit one way

or another from the works, with an estimated 5,000 families benefitting directly, and 2,549 new housing units were to be built (Interviewee C).

However, of the total budget of R\$500 million (\$200 million) for the PAC-Manguinhos, more than 60 percent was to be spent on a two-kilometer elevation of the railway. Making this a priority investment was to be one of the project's major controversies. First, it left almost no money to environmentally and socially more important subprojects such as a sewage network, a system to drain rainwater, and a water supply scheme. Instead, less costly and more visible infrastructures were built, such as 240,000 square meters of pavements, streetlights, recuperation of riverbanks, and a bridge crossing the Jacaré River. The construction of these infrastructures can be interpreted as an act of "camouflage" that aims to "distract from something else" (Pauschinger, this issue), namely the spectacularity and authoritarian power dimension of the elevated railway. Second, the responsible architect admitted that the elevated railway divided the Manguinhos area physically in two separate parts. Subprojects with a much bigger social value were a new train station (a three-story building with train platforms, public sanitary facilities, and a shopping floor) and a Metropolitan Park of bike lanes, amphitheater, people's market and food kiosks. Also popular was the construction of a civic center, later named the Citizenship Square, which comprised a college, a library, a psychiatric support center, a legal support office, a youth center, a 24-hour health clinic, and income generation hub (Christovão 2012).

All the works had a component of the PAC Social, set up by the State Secretariat for Social Assistance and Human Rights, to attend to the needs of the families who were to be relocated because of ongoing public works. The PAC Social was allocated 2.5 percent of the entire PAC budget and spent it mainly on indemnity, renting of temporary accommodation, and new housing units for the clients. MSF activists were overall not impressed: "In the PAC Social, there was a frequent turnover of either companies or functionaries.. And the social workers often rejected complaints on the ground they were not responsible" (Interviewee C).

The Rio de Janeiro municipality (*prefeitura*) was responsible for some separate PAC subprojects, which were poorly coordinated with those of the state of Rio de Janeiro (Interviewee F). The municipal Manguinhos program amounted to around R\$95 million (less than \$40 million). Its subprojects comprised the construction of four nurseries; a mother/child health center; some networks of water supply, sewage, and drainage; lighting and tree planting; outdoor upgrading; and 1,548 expropriations with resettlement of the families. Its subprojects were planned to impact seven favelas and more than 40,000 residents (Interviewee J). An activist and community leader summarized: "The municipality started to do good things, but they soon sided with the entrepreneur companies and left the stage to them when people started to complain about the low quality of work" (Interviewee F).

In other words, the extremely top-down way of managing the PAC in Rio de Janeiro favored the interests of aligned private companies, to the detriment of downward accountability and community participation in the planning and design of the public works. The oligarchic-patrimonial governance system shaped the projects. Governor Cabral became an extravagant, corrupt representative of this patrimonialistic governance system, based on an intimate relationship with the richest building entrepreneurs of the region. This system is also based on the domination of the populace not only with sticks, as in the days of slavery, but also with carrots. Typically, the "civilized" instruments ("carrots") of patrimonial governance are mainly:

- (1) capacity to address some popular needs, but in a rather paternalistic (top-down) and selective manner;
- (2) material rewards to those who could offer valuable political support (patronage and clientelism) (Schwarcz 2019).

The PAC-Favelas in Manguinhos and its PAC Social component displayed how these instruments work. They ensured some popularity and electoral gains for the state governor and city major. Nevertheless, this managerial approach faced resistance in the local community.

The Manguinhos Social Forum: PAC Experiences from Below

The Manguinhos Social Forum was to be an “autonomous and horizontal organization of the civil society” in order to “activate a direct citizenship” and promote, defend, and guarantee social rights (OCU 2010). One of the activists explained how the arrival of the PAC instigated the MSF’s formation and why it became a key focus: “When the PAC came, we knew they would run over us. In previous interventions, we have seen how public authorities operate. They always offered nonparticipation. We organized ourselves so that the history was not to repeat itself. We believed that organized we could obtain some type of participation” (Interviewee C).

From Mobilization to Demobilization

Formed in March 2007 with about three hundred people in the first meeting (Interviewee D), the MSF quickly prepared basic and initial inputs to the PAC. The forum established thematic working groups with community activists as well as technicians and researchers from Fiocruz to construct shared knowledge and ideas related to equitable and sustainable development in Manguinhos (OCU 2010). Meetings were held in different places in Manguinhos addressing each community, with more than two hundred people attending on average (Interviewee C). When people heard rumors about details contained in the PAC intervention, they would ask the president of their residents’ association, for example, “Why was elevation of the railway a priority? What about sanitation for all, houses for all?” As the associations could not provide answers, people approached the MSF instead.

The forum for its part had enough information to identify at an early stage a major weakness in the plan: 3,500 families had to move because of the works, yet only 500 new homes were to be built. As a result of these objections, the house scheme was increased to 2,549 new houses—probably the MSF’s biggest achievement in relation to the PAC (Interviewee C).⁴ However, as the PAC public works proceeded, fewer people turned out to the MSF meetings—less than an average of one hundred people by the end of 2008 (Interviewee D). The activists offer a mixed set of explanations for the demobilization.

First, the MSF could not help solve people’s immediate problems: “Living in Manguinhos is a question of emergency. Garbage at the house gate, people around you dying . . . This makes it difficult to mobilize people” (Interviewee C) This echoes the description of everyday emergencies that people have to address within the precarious conditions of urban poverty in Rio de Janeiro (Millar 2018). “We were not able to do anything when people came to us with serious problems” (Interviewee A), because the MSF focused on common structural problems in Manguinhos and long-term projects to solve them (Interviewee C). Second, people did not see any concrete results of the forum’s involvement. The MSF promoted democratic practices, but this may be gradually undermined if people get demotivated because they cannot see results (Interviewee D). There was no constructive dialogue with the PAC managers: “Project representatives who came to the MSF meetings were low-ranking people without much authority. They could not answer our questions. Partly because the state and the municipality were neither well coordinated nor had a clear division of labor and responsibility. That makes people frustrated, and they stop coming to meetings” (Interviewee C).

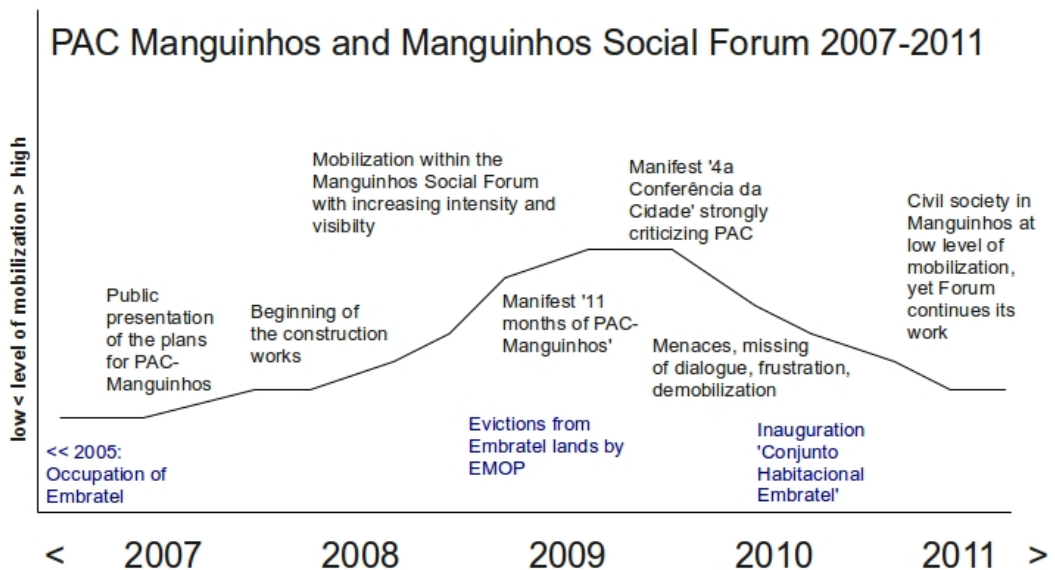
A particularly important obstacle to a constructive dialogue process was the lack of an inclusive monitoring committee. The MSF proposed this committee to be inter-sectorial, integrating

officials from the municipality, state, and federal institutions. In addition, they demanded the MSF's inclusion, as well as direct representation from the communities. This was justified in a document sent to the authorities (Interviewee C). The state representatives first said these demands were reasonable and legitimate. After six months of juridical consideration, the state government responded that PAC projects were not obliged to formalize such a monitoring committee. At this point, the presidents of the residents' associations were participating in the MSF, but they demanded that participation in the monitoring committee be remunerated. This did not get support from the other people in the MSF. "How could the committee members truly monitor the works of the government if they are paid by the same government?" (Interviewee F). Indeed, the state government rejected the demand for paid participation.

This resulted in the presidents of residents' associations leaving the MSF. They then entered into direct contact with the site managers of the PAC project and established a monitoring committee with them. MSF activists considered this move a betrayal. "The monitoring committee became a government vehicle (*chapa branca*). It was summoned by the PAC Social" (Interviewee F). The interviewee connected with the PAC Social confirmed there was a monitoring committee for public works, plus one for relocation of people and one for income generation. They met every week with the entrepreneurs to discuss how to avoid social tensions and manage complaints from people evicted. The PAC Social manager brought demands for changes in the interventions to the EMOP. An example of their demands being fulfilled was the accommodation of premises for a shop within the housing complexes (Interviewee J). Nevertheless, there was dissatisfaction within this monitoring committee regarding lack of detailed progress reports and lack of responses to queries about the interventions (Christovão 2012).

Thus, after a brief period of broad mobilization of hundreds of people in the forum, demobilization took the upper hand because of factors such as fruitless talks with the PAC management, limited capacity of MSF organizers to attend to people's grievances, and a split between MSF activists and the "traditional" leaders of the residents' associations. Instead, a clientelistic arrangement was installed.

Figure 3: Mobilization and demobilization in Manguinhos (© the author).



Assessments of Impacts of the PAC Manguinhos

After most of the PAC projects had been completed in 2011, the community activists presented two types of assessments: of the physical interventions and their social benefits, and of the governance of the interventions and its political effects.

The Physical Interventions and Their Social Benefits

The activists kept questioning the large portion of resources (more than 60 percent) channeled to the elevation of the railway. This is clearly a reflection of the power of the construction companies and the willingness of leading politicians to hand out contracts to them. Housing and sanitation, in addition to health and education, should have had a higher priority. Moreover, the two major problems of Manguinhos were not adequately addressed: flooding and violence. These serious complaints aside, our interviewees admitted that the PAC public works delivered goods with reasonable social value:

- (1) Jobs: “Not jobs of quality, not enduring jobs, but still jobs that increased the income of many hundred families” (Interviewee F).
- (2) New homes: Despite being of poor value for money and of low quality, more than two thousand new housing units were built. Most people who lived in precarious conditions (e.g., in abandoned factories) could either move in to a subsidized rented flat or be relocated to new houses nearby. This time, they were not dumped in the periphery (Interviewee D).
- (3) Some cultural-educative facilities: Although these facilities were not on a top priority, people appreciated the construction of a civic center that included a public library (Interviewee A).

The Governance of the Interventions and Their Political Effects

The MSF issued a document of critical evaluation of the PAC in February 2009. In addition to denouncing a violation of rights, the document echoed the demands and proposals put forward by the civil society organized through the MSF in order to ensure a better use of the PAC resources channeled into the region (Christovão 2012). “The democratic management of these public policies is fundamental to guarantee the effectiveness of the investments” (Interviewee D). The MSF managed to reshape the interventions once, early in the process, when it successfully lobbied for a fourfold increase of new housing units. MSF was in this case helped by pressure from technicians in the Caixa Econômica Federal, the entity responsible for social housing, as well as from the Ministry of Cities (Interviewee D).

However, the emergence of a close collaboration between the PAC and the “traditional leaders” in the Manguinhos area created several effects.

First, it resulted in a clientelistic relationship where the government leaders offered jobs and houses to the people in exchange for votes. “People who live in awful conditions, may give you a vote once you give him a small house” (Interviewee C). The presidents of the residents’ associations were the mediators in this process of clientelistic co-optation (Interviewee D). They could handpick the people to get jobs, in many cases select the people to get new homes (Interviewee E). In return, they served as election officers (*cabos eleitorais*) for the politicians that pulled the strings (Interviewee F). The PAC and many other similar public schemes helped Governor Cabral get reelected with more than 66 percent of the votes in 2010.

Second, it led to verbal aggressions and physical threats against the MSF activists. Since the “traditional leaders” in Manguinhos had now involved themselves with politicians and entre-

preneurs, despite blatant condemnation by local civil society actors, these leaders needed to align with the local drug traffickers. On the one hand, this was to dissuade civic opponents. On the other hand, the leaders hoped they could control traffickers and calm the police. This might, by the way, turn the “traditional leaders” into instruments of the drug traffickers and not vice versa. For the MSF activists, the consequence was threats on their lives. The first warnings came when they opposed certain building projects (Interviewee E). “It was not about abstract violence, it was quite concrete. If you poke your nose into something, it might be hit by a claw of iron. ‘You should mind your own business, you understand?’” (Interviewee C). This created a climate of fear of participating. People tried to avoid eviction from their own homes, kept a low profile, and preferred not to speak out loudly, “because speaking up meant you were exposed.” There were shootouts around them every week. “So when people receive their second warning, then their third warning, they shut up” (Interviewee D).

This way, “the forum had to change its way of operating” (Interviewee D). Activists had to give in to the combination of clientelism and threats of violence. They had to change their strategy from openly criticizing PAC projects to tacitly educating activists and preparing them for long-term challenges (Interviewee C).

Occupation by the Military/Police and Civilian Responses

On 25 September 2010, the PAC Manguinhos inaugurated its first new housing complex, with the presence of president, governor, mayor, and deterrent security forces. Most of the public works had been completed in 2011. A transient phase of state interventionism based on “civil engineering” now seemed to be followed by a more enduring phase of “military engineering.” Manguinhos was to be overwhelmed by the “Olympic exceptionalist” security governance seen in Rio de Janeiro as a whole.

The governor pushed for increased deployment of state police forces to counter “public security risks” in regions near the main venues for the sport mega-events coming up in 2014 and 2016 (see Pauschinger, this issue). Manguinhos is in close proximity to the Maracanã Stadium (football) and the Engenhão Stadium (athletics). With political support from some of the community leaders in Manguinhos, combined with marginalization of civil society forces such as the MSF, it was easier to pursue this policing strategy (Interviewee F).

Occupation by the Military/Police

At 5 a.m. on 14 October 2012, military and police forces occupied Manguinhos. More than two thousand men participated in *Operação Manguinhos*, of which nine hundred were from feared Special Police Operations Battalion or other departments of Rio’s PM. They met no resistance. They carried out the operation to prepare for the installation of a Pacifying Police Unit (UPP). On 16 January 2013, they passed on the responsibility—for what was officially termed an occupation—to the new unit, the 29th UPP.

The relationship between the residents and the UPP police became very tense. People demonstrated against several cases of police abuse—above all unjustified killings such as in March–April 2013 (a 16-year-old boy and a 22-year-old man killed), October 2013 (a young man killed) and May 2014 (a 19-year-old named Jonathan de Oliveira Lima killed; his mother, Ana Paula Oliveira, demanded justice and fronted a new movement, Mothers of Manguinhos (interview with Glaucia Marinho from the NGO *Justiça Global*, Rio de Janeiro, 3 April 2019).

Also inaugurated in 2013, on the Day of the Police (29 September), was Cidade da Policia. The construction of this so-called City of Police had originally been announced by the Rio state government in May 2011. The “city” was located on the border between Jacaré and Manguinhos and contained the headquarters of the Polícia Civil (Civil Police), the crime preventive and investigative arm of the state police, with around 3,000 officers and 32 specialized branches (“delegations”). Scattered over an area of 41,000 square meters, the “city” included 10 vast buildings and a multisport field, areas for several other leisure activities, kiosks, and cafeterias (Christovão 2012). The very physical presence of this armed power center of the state demonstrated both symbolically and in reality the permanent occupation of the Manguinhos complex.

A heightened state of insecurity was created after the Civil Police officer Bruno Guimarães Buhler was killed on 11 August 2017 in a big police operation in Jacaré. For the next 10 days, the police carried out actions that led to the death of six citizens, with seven injured (*Brasil de Fato* 2019), and the municipality locked out 131,000 pupils from school for at least one day. This was part of a pattern where schools, nurseries, libraries, health centers, and civic facilities were closed once the police started their operations. People’s rights to come and go and pursue their normal lives are thus denied.

In January 2019, elite snipers from a tower in the City of Police shot three citizens, killing two of them. This type of extrajudicial execution of local people did provoke, not surprisingly, a strong reaction in the community and in the mass media. The recently sworn-in Governor Witzel announced in public that the state police used snipers to kill drug traffickers and that this was “constitutional and perfectly legal” (Araújo 2019). This met a sharp response from civil society organizations. Amnesty International and Justiça Global denounced the governor and reported him to the UN Commission of Human Rights (interview with Gláucia Marinho).

The Mothers’ Uprising and Other Responses

According to Ana Paula Oliveira, the principal objective of Mothers of Manguinhos was “to attend mothers and families of victims of state violence . . . We have lost our sons for the sake of a public security which sacrifices the lives of the young and black in the favelas.” The movement was initiated in the context of killings in the operations of the UPP Manguinhos but was later extended to other regions affected by the militarization (interview, Rio de Janeiro, 5 April 2019). This way, “the pain of grief [*luto*] was transformed into struggle [*luta*] of diverse women in the communities of Rio de Janeiro” (*Brasil de Fato* 2019). This is part of a more general and gendered pattern: “In recent years, mostly thanks to efforts from favela activists and favela community journalism, stories of black mothers who have lost a child have found their way into mainstream media . . . On the stage of mourning, mothers are the central and most legitimate actors that can have their voices heard” (Gilsing, this issue).

On 11 May 2019, Mother’s Day in Brazil, the Mothers of Manguinhos and the MSF organized a local event called the Mothers’ Uprising for Memory, Justice, and Liberty. The event, which has been organized nationally every year since 2015, involved marches, a poetry slam, art events, seminars, and public debates. Organized with support from national NGOs, it was part of the Week of Victims of Violence in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The event paid tribute to the people killed in Manguinhos during the preceding year (*Brasil de Fato* 2019). *Fala Manguinhos!* (Speak up, Manguinhos!) provided infrastructural support to the movement against the military occupation. This community newspaper had since 2014 effectively amplified the voices of residents in the Manguinhos complex. Governed by a community council and with a coordinator elected by the members, it was created to defend human and environmental rights and promote citizenship and health. Because of the military occupation, the initiative became a portal for

security-related information as well. The group had to stop circulating the print newspaper because it lacked financial resources but continued to share notices on a Facebook page with more than 21,000 followers (Bessler 2018).

Also important was the Committee against Violence, established in 2016, which organized regular meetings with participation from residents, art collectives, community associations, and workers' unions at Fiocruz to discuss how to meet the violence and violation of rights. They promoted a proactive series of events such as the Cultural Saturday "I Just Want to Be Happy" (*Sábado Cultural "Eu só quero ser feliz"*) as well as campaigns such as that to defend the new library, which was threatened by closure from the financial austerity policies of the public authorities. Furthermore, the committee helped resurrect the Walk of Peace, which had been organized several times since 2005. The walk managed to occupy the Leopoldo Bulhões Avenue, gathering a couple of thousand people and offering various services and cultural experiences (*Brasil de Fato* 2019).

Pac'Stão: New Generation, New Forms of Community Activism

On 15 July 2019, the Roda Cultural do Pac'Stão celebrated its second anniversary. This hip-hop event is held every Monday night at the Manguinhos Library and its surroundings, the Citizenship Square. Brazil has a long popular tradition of *roda* (circle of people), a public party with musical performance competition. The hip-hop circle Pac'Stão (2020) organizes verbal-musical "duels" between MCs. "It's called Pac'Stão because we're here on the Gaza Strip," explained one of the event organizers. The choice of the name Pac'Stão, while alluding to a historically embattled country (Pakistan), uses the war narrative to subvert the logic of real violence affecting the region. "What motivated us to organize the *roda* was oppression, specifically police oppression" (Fenizola 2019). This way, the youth opposed the "silence" in the favela caused by the police interventions (see Gilsing, this issue).

Pac'Stão is also a play on the acronym PAC and the suffix "-stan" meaning "land of"—so, the land of the PAC. The reference to the Growth Acceleration Program comes from the infrastructure built around the venue, the Citizenship Square. It includes a housing complex, a state college, a skate park, a library, a women's house, and a youth center. But the women's house has been closed since 2016; the youth center, which was supposed to be a benchmark for other initiatives, has experienced extensive looting and vandalism. The library was shut for two years but has reopened and been renamed the Biblioteca Marielle Franco, thanks to residents' efforts. Marielle Franco was a black feminist politician assassinated in March 2018.⁵ The task of occupying the plaza and promoting citizenship—when the facilities that should have been there to support the population have been threatened by closure—has been taken up by the Pac'Stão movement for the past two years.

Concluding Remarks

Community activism has been an important feature of the Manguinhos region for the past 50 years. Arguably, three cycles of upturns and downturns emerged that, to a large extent, reflected national or at least citywide trends.

The first cycle started with the democratization of Brazil in the late 1970s and peaked in the early 1990s, strongly associated with the social movements that created the PT. This cycle can therefore be termed *petista*. Residents' associations were created in most of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, and in Manguinhos, saw successful cooperative relocations of people affected by

flooding or living in precarious conditions. However, the leaders of the residents' associations increasingly became part of a clientelistic political structure.

The second cycle, a main focus in this article, was spurred by the expectations created after Lula was elected president in 2002. This cycle can be defined as *lulista* and was characterized by a dynamic relationship between the federal president and his low-income voters across the country (Singer 2012). However, Lula's developmentalists did not think the power relations posed a problem. When the PAC arrived in Manguinhos, a power struggle was unleashed regarding the control of the unprecedented amount of public money to be spent in the area. Between the federal president and his followers in the favelas there were political-economic elites and citizens' groups that struggled to control the resources flowing from the federal to the local level. One of the groups was found in the favelas among young people who exploited improved opportunities to take secondary and tertiary education, and many of them formed a new generation of activists who participated in Manguinhos Social Forum, together with "veterans" from the previous cycle. They advocated transparency and empowered participation of the targeted communities in the planning and implementation of the PAC interventions. The MSF became a strong "invented space" of participation. At the same time, the MSF became the base for radical "contentious politics" and confronted the PAC and state managers with shared grievances and priorities (contentions) of the community.

Another and much more powerful group was led by Rio de Janeiro Governor Sérgio Cabral, who was intimately allied with building contractors in the private sector. The governor and his allies refused the MSF's demands. Instead, they promoted collaboration with "traditional" community leaders (the presidents of residents' associations) who already were part of the vertical clientelistic structures and were aligned with drug traffickers locally. The result was an unscrupulous coalition who managed to sideline, if not silence, the MSF activists and shrink their room for maneuver. Forced removals of residents and other repressive measures were cushioned by social workers who paved the way for a smooth building process. It resulted, on the one hand, in the delivery of new physical infrastructures (e.g., the elevation of the railway) that were controversial yet big enough to ensure big financial contributions to the governor's election slush funds. On the other hand, there were more popular building projects such as two thousand housing units and several useful public facilities. The governing elite captured additional votes as a result and were reelected with huge margins toward the end of 2010. Cabral and his allies managed to continue, and reap the financial profits of, the oligarchic-patrimonial system with its collusion of private and public elite interests, authoritarian treatment of Afro-descendent communities, and smart use of clientelism and electoral facilities to govern the masses.⁶ In Manguinhos, the PAC reproduced patrimonial forms of domination with the help of interconnections between state-level oligarchs and local-level "oligarchs" such as residents' association leaders and drug trafficking bosses.

In 2012, the phase of "political and civil engineering" passed on to a phase of "military engineering" in the domination of Manguinhos. Military and police forces occupied the township and subsequently installed police stations of a new type designed to keep "pacifying" the communities. The space for community activism was closing in when the City of Police was inaugurated in the township in 2013 containing headquarters and barracks of the state police. The very physical presence of this armed power center of the state demonstrated both symbolically and in reality the permanent occupation of the Manguinhos complex. An "Olympic fortress" (Paus-chinger, this issue), the City of Police became a major legacy of the "Olympic exceptionalism" that revamped Rio de Janeiro's authoritarian security governance. This supports the argument that Manguinhos, like other favela areas in Rio de Janeiro, is best understood as a modern colonial formation (Salem and Bertelsen, this issue).

However, as demonstrated everywhere in Rio de Janeiro, this Leviathan approach did not bring “peace and order.” Instead, violence, especially lethal police violence, continued to increase. Young, usually black, men were the main victims. In 2019, the Rio de Janeiro governor, who was aligned with the ex-military and newly elected far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, applauded police snipers who “took out” alleged criminals. This has provoked new forms of community resistance and activism, fronted by women—in particular, mothers of victims of violence—and black youth. The latter expressed themselves through a local hip-hop movement named Pac'Stão. In addition, the Manguinhos Social Forum seems to have been resurrected. In May 2019, with Mothers of Manguinhos, the MSF organized a significant local event as part of a national social movement: the Mothers' Uprising for Memory, Justice, and Liberty.

This means that a third cycle of community activism has emerged. It could be named *mariellista*, after city councilor Marielle Franco, who was killed because she was a prominent and confrontational black feminist from the favela. The library built by the PAC in Manguinhos and run by community activists is named after her. In other words, this case study demonstrates that while a racialized and gendered military-repressive logic of action may have the upper hand in a favela cluster in Rio de Janeiro, forces that embrace a civilian-participatory logic of action persist and resist.

The article has examined a “territory of exception” in a dual sense. First, most of the population is excluded from civilian, political, and social rights, and in this way, Manguinhos is subject to structural violence. Second, Manguinhos is under military (and militarized police) rule, where armed forces of the state coexist with, rather than substitute, the direct physical violence of uncivil organized crime. These forces secure a corrupt coalition of patrimonialism under the ideological cover of neo-developmentalism. That oligarchic coalition provides, on the one hand, huge rents to entrepreneurs and politicians and, on the other, some jobs and houses, as well as cultural-educative facilities to the people in a clientelistic manner. Against these forces is a third type of “exception” played out in this territory. It is performed by networks of community activists who keep inventing spaces of participation, and keep questioning the logic of violence. Now and then, they are able to organize counteroffensives and contentious politics to show everybody that another type of society based on solidarity and nonviolence is possible. As noted by Margit Ystanes and Thomas Salem (this issue), “a new wave of black, queer, and gendered activism” has lately been unfolding in Rio and Brazil. Manguinhos is one of the places this can be observed par excellence.

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NOTES

1. All interviewees in Manguinhos were promised anonymity.
2. The favelas exhibit a comparatively large proportion of Afro-descendant population (black/*negro* and colored/*pardo* population): 65.8 percent. The numbers are from the 2010 national Institute of Geography and Statistics census.
3. Cabral was considered the most powerful figure in Rio politics for a decade until he was pushed out of office by anti-corruption protests in April 2014 with nine months left in his second term. In 2016, he was arrested, accused of charging 5 percent on every public contract awarded to private companies. His deputy and successor as governor (2014–2018), Pezão, was arrested in November 2018 on similar charges.
4. Other informants offer a lower number of housing units actually delivered.
5. Marielle Franco was from Maré, a large favela complex next to Manguinhos in Rio's North Zone. A highly popular city councillor, she was brutally assassinated when she drove home from a meeting on the evening of 14 March 2018 (see Londoño 2019).
6. Cabral later admitted he received huge amounts of money in bribes for projects ahead of the 2016 Olympics. It was part of “a tradition” in charging bribes from private sector contractors, he alleged (Holmes 2019). Cabral was sentenced to 198 years in prison, without deterring his successors from continuing this patrimonial “tradition” (see BBC 2018; Ribeiro 2020).

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